

**Amendments to the claims:**

Please amend claims 1, 3-5, 9-11 and 14-16 as shown in the following listing of claims. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

- 1 1. (currently amended) A multi-component icon generated from  
2 characteristics of a data object where the characteristics include data object  
3 content and data object metadata, said icon comprising:  
4 a plurality of ~~icon portions~~ ~~visual traits~~, each having a plurality of  
5 visual variations, each ~~icon portion trait~~ being variably assignable to any one  
6 characteristic of the data object wherein each variation of the at least one  
7 characteristic is visually represented by the icon by a corresponding one visual  
8 variation of a variably assigned ~~icon portion~~ ~~visual trait~~.
- 1 2. (original) The icon as described in Claim 1 wherein the data object is one  
2 of a word processing document file, executable files, software applications, audio  
3 files, image files, video files, and print spool queues.
- 1 3. (currently amended) The icon as described in Claim 1 wherein the ~~icon~~  
2 ~~portions are contiguous portions of the icon~~ ~~visual traits comprise a plurality of~~  
3 ~~icon portions~~.
- 1 4. (currently amended) The icon as described in Claim ~~1~~ ~~3~~ wherein the ~~icon~~  
2 ~~portions~~ ~~visual traits~~ comprise at least one of a main body portion.
- 1 5. (currently amended) The icon as described in Claim 4 wherein the ~~icon~~  
2 ~~portions~~ ~~visual traits~~ comprise at least side portions adjacent to the main body  
3 portion.
- 1 6. (original) The icon as described in Claim 1 wherein the visual variations  
2 comprise at least one of variations of colors, variations of shades of colors,  
3 variations of shapes, and variations of patterns.

1 7. (original) The icon as described in Claim 1 wherein the visual variations  
2 have secondary visual variations.

1 8. (original) The icon as described in Claim 1 being interactive with other  
2 icons corresponding to other data objects so as to visually indicate similarities and  
3 differences in characteristics of the data object and the other data objects.

1 9. (currently amended) A method of generating a multi-component icon from  
2 characteristics of a data object where the characteristics include data object  
3 content and data object metadata, said method comprising:

4 providing an icon having a plurality of visual traits each having a  
5 plurality of visual variations; and

6 variably assigning any one of the visual traits to any one of the  
7 characteristics of the data object metadata such that each variation of a selected  
8 characteristic of the data object metadata ~~each variation of the characteristics~~ is  
9 represented by a visual variation of a selected ~~the assigned~~ visual trait; and

10 displaying the icon according to the assignment of the selected  
11 visual trait ~~visual traits~~ to the selected characteristic ~~characteristics~~.

1 10. (currently amended) The method of Claim 9 wherein the selected  
2 characteristic of the data object metadata ~~icon~~ is variably assigned dependent on  
3 user preference.

1 11. (currently amended) The method of Claim 9 wherein the selected  
2 characteristic of the data object metadata ~~icon~~ is variably assigned automatically.

1 12. (original) The method of Claim 9 wherein the icon is generated with a user  
2 initiated interface and variably assigning is selected through the interface.

1 13. (original) The method of Claim 12 wherein variably assigning is session  
2 based through the interface such that in one session a given visual trait may be  
3 assigned to a first characteristic and in a second session the given visual trait may  
4 be assigned to a second characteristic.

1 14. (currently amended) A method of creating a multi-component icon for  
2 each of a set of data objects from characteristics of the set of data objects, the  
3 characteristics including data object content and data object metadata, the method  
4 comprising:  
5 determining a common characteristic of the data object metadata  
6 common to the set of data objects;  
7 determining the number of variations associated with the common  
8 characteristic;  
9 determining a visual trait of the multi-component icon having a  
10 corresponding number of visual variations that are greater than or equal to the  
11 number of variations of the common characteristic and assigning it to the common  
12 characteristic; and  
13 displaying the customized icons for the set of data objects  
14 according to the assignment of the visual trait to the common characteristic.

1 15. (currently amended) The method as described in Claim 14 wherein the  
2 common characteristic of the data object metadata ~~icon~~ is variably assigned  
3 dependent on user preference.

1 16. (currently amended) The method as described in Claim 14 wherein the  
2 common characteristic of the data object metadata ~~icon~~ is variably assigned  
3 automatically.

1 17. (original) The method as described in Claim 14 wherein the icon is  
2 generated with a user initiated interface and variably assigning is selected through  
3 the interface.